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5th INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE "TOURISM TRENDS AND ADVANCES IN THE 21st CENTURY"

Basic questions of ecotourism in Greece: ecotourism demand and supply, planning and protection, management bodies, enterprises.

AVGERINOU- KOLONIAS SOFIA

Professor of Spatial Planning, NTUA

SPYROPOULOS IOANNIS

Engineer of Spatial and Urban Planning and Regional Development,
PhD candidate, NTUA


TOUFENGOPOULOU ANASTASIA

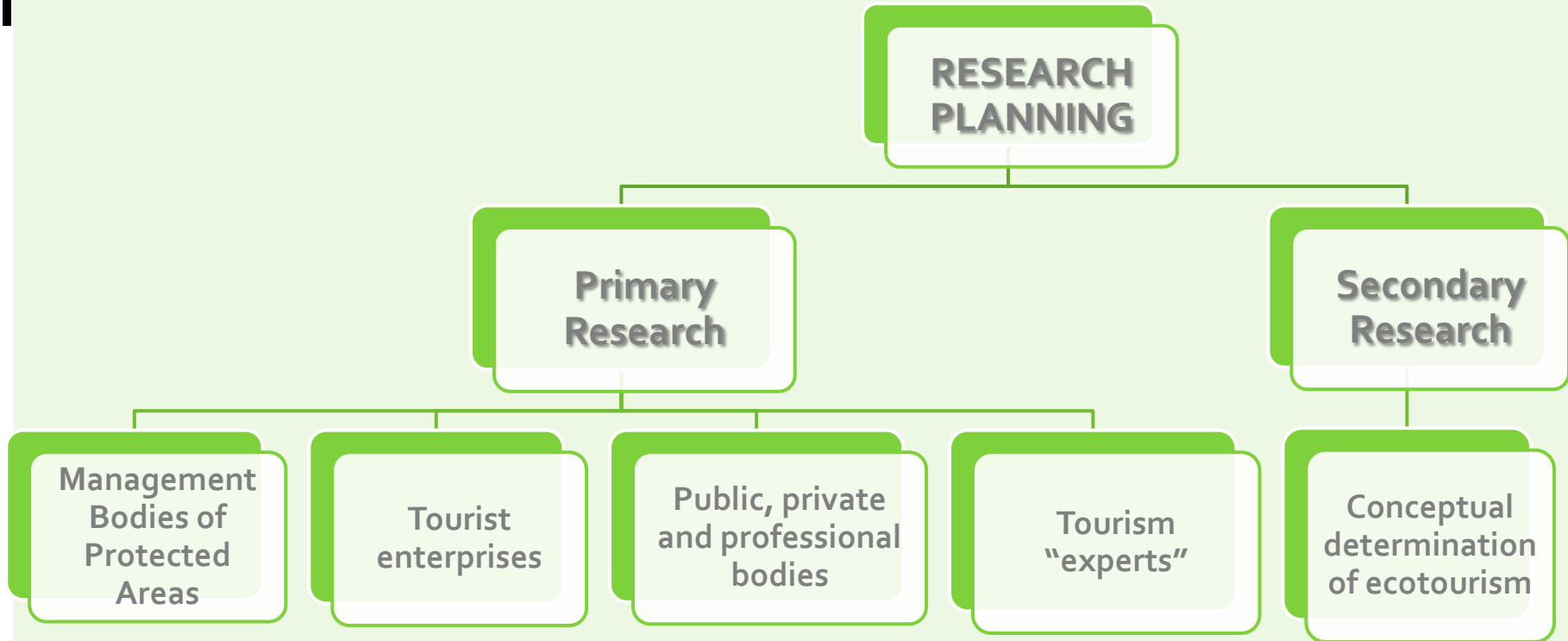
Engineer of Spatial and Urban Planning and Regional Development,
PhD candidate, NTUA

May 29th – June 2nd, Rhodes



Research questions:

- ❑ **Ecotourist supply** (protected natural areas and their allocation in the Greek territory)
 - ❑ **Ecotourist demand** (number of ecotourists, spatial and time allocation per protected area and month)
 - ❑ **Ecotourism planning** (special environmental assessments, joint ministerial decisions/ presidential decrees designating and demarcating protected areas, management plans)
 - ❑ **The protected area management bodies** involved in the ecotourism development process
 - ❑ **Tourist enterprises** engaging in the field of ecotourism.
- 



The key characteristics of the development and organization of ecotourism in Greece



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK : CONCEPTUAL DETERMINATION OF ECOTOURISM

“Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (TIES, 1990)

Main characteristics identifying true ecotourism (Honey, 2008):

- ✓ It involves travel to natural destinations, which are usually under some kind of protection.
- ✓ Minimizes impact by using either recycled materials or plentifully available local building materials, renewable sources of energy, regulated number and mode of behaviour of tourists, etc.
- ✓ It builds environmental awareness through education, for both tourists and residents.
- ✓ It provides direct financial benefits for conservation; namely the environmental protection, research and education through a variety of mechanisms (park entrance fees, tour company, hotel, airline and airport taxes and voluntary contributions).
- ✓ It provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- ✓ It respects local culture.
- ✓ It supports human rights and democratic movements.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK : CONCEPTUAL DETERMINATION OF ECOTOURISM

The analysis of the definitions results in five main pillars on which the ecotourism construction is based:

1. Interest in the *nature* and contribution to its protection.
2. Benefits for the *local society*.
3. Promotion of *education* and *interpretation*.
4. *Sustainable management*.
5. *Low scale*

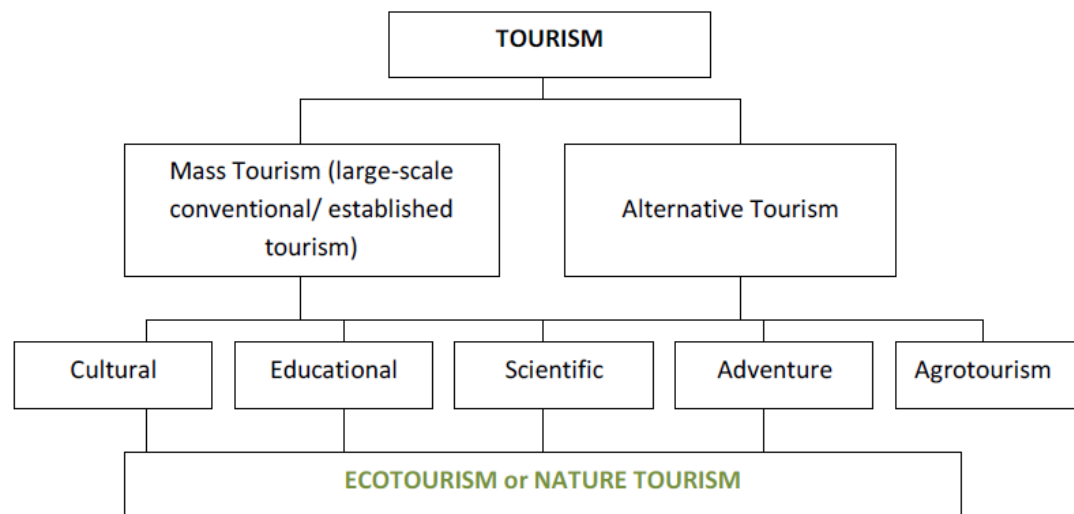
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK : CONCEPTUAL DETERMINATION OF ECOTOURISM

CONCEPTS RELEVANT TO ECOTOURISM

Subtle distinction in the conceptual definition of three forms of tourism which the researches tend to address as one, *because all three of them usually take place in natural areas of environmental significance.*



The primary research adopt a wider conceptual approach to ecotourism



FIELD STUDY: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF ECOTOURISM IN GREECE

Field Study Identification Details

Target-Population	Sample	Data Collection Techniques	Timeframe	Research Purpose
Protected Area Management Bodies	Full	Literature and online research –Structured interview	May-December 2012	Exploration/Description
Tourist enterprises engaging in the field of ecotourism	Full	Literature and online research –Structured interview	May-September 2012	Exploration/Description
Bodies carrying out ecotourism-related activities	Representative	Semi-structured interview	May-September 2012	Exploration
Tourism experts	Evaluation	Semi-structured interview	May-September 2012	Exploration

Source: data processed by the author

FIELD STUDY: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF ECOTOURISM IN GREECE

Criteria for the comparative evaluation of the 28 Management Bodies (MBs) of Protected Areas (PAs) in Greece:

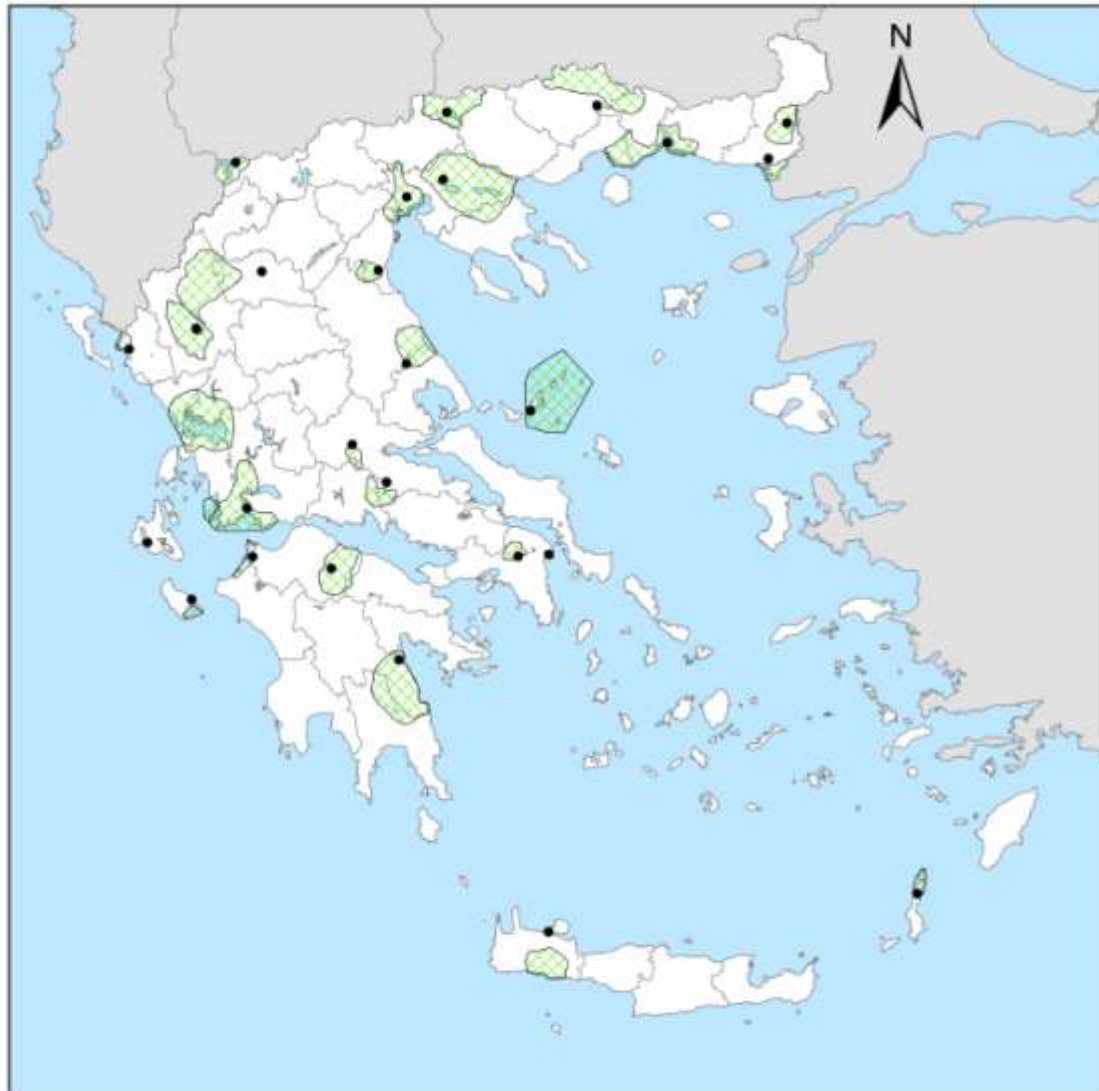
- (a) the recognition of the environmental importance of the PAs
- (b) the progress made in planning the PAs and, subsequently, their protection prospects
- (c) the facilities and activities provided by the MB
- (d) the tourist demand

(a) the recognition of the environmental importance of the PAs


	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Protected areas under the national legislation																												
National Forests								X	X			X						X		X	X	X						X
Aesthetic Forests											X										X			X				
Reserve Natural Monuments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Controlled Hunting Areas						X							X	X						X								
Areas of Absolute Nature Protection				X		X	X	X									X		X							X		
Areas of Nature Protection	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X		X				X	X	X	X		
National Parks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Protected Natural Formations/ Landscapes																												
Eco-Development Areas											X															X	X	
Protected areas under the international/european legislation																												
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention)	X		X		X	X	X	X							X		X									X		
World Heritage Sites												X																X
Biosphere Reserves																												
Geoparks									X															X				
Specially Protected Areas (Barcelona Convention)														X	X													X
Biogenetic Reserves								X	X			X						X	X	X								X
Eurodiploma Sites																												X
Special Protection Areas (Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Special Areas of Conservation (Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: field research

PROTECTED AREAS UNDER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT BODIES



LEGEND

- Management Bodies Headquarters
-  Protected areas under the responsibility of management bodies

Source: geodata.gov.gr, data processed by the author

5th International Scientific Conference "Tourism Trends and Advances in the 21st Century"

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ecotourism demand and supply, planning
and protection, management bodies,
enterprises

Rhodes, 2013

SCALE



(b) the progress made in planning the PAs and, subsequently, their protection prospects

	Protected Areas	SEA	JMD/PD	MP
1	National Park of Evros Delta			
2	National Park of Dadia - Lefkimi - Soufli Forest			
3	National Park of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Nestos Delta-Vistonis-Ismaris)			
4	Rodopi Mountain Range National Park			
5	National Park of Kerkini Lake			
6	National Park of Koronia-Volvi Lakes			
7	National Park of Axios- Loudias- Aliakmonas Deltas			
8	National Park of Prespes			
9	National Park of Northern Pindos (National Forests of Vikos- Aaos and Pindos)			
10	National Park of Tzoumerka, Peristeri and Arachthos Gorge			
11	Eco-Development Area of Pamvotis Lake			
12	National Park of Olympus Mountain			
13	Eco-Development Area of Karla - Mavrovouni- Kefalovriso- Velestino			
14	National Marine Park of Alonnisos- Northern Sporades			
15	National Park of Amvrakikos Wetlands			
16	Area of Nature Protection of Narrow and Estuaries of Kalama and Aheroda Rivers			
17	National Park of Mesolongi Lagoon			
18	National Park of Ainos Forest			
19	National Marine Park of Zakynthos			
20	National Park of Oiti Forest			
21	National Park of Parnassos Forest			
22	National Park of Parnitha Forest			
23	National Park of Schinia- Marathona			
24	National Park of Chelmos- Vouraikos			
25	National Park of Kotychi- Strofylia Wetlands			
26	Eco-Development Area of Pariona Mountain and Moustos Wetland			
27	Eco-Development Area of Karpathos - Saria			
28	National Park of Samaria and Lefka Ori Forests			

Legend

	Special Environmental Assessment (SEA) Approved
	Special Environmental Assessment (SEA) submitted for approval
	Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) / Presidential Decree (PD) demarcating / designating a protected area
	Draft Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) / Presidential Decree (PD) demarcating / designating a protected area
	Management Plan (MP) submitted for approval
	Management Plan (MP) submitted under elaboration

Source: field research

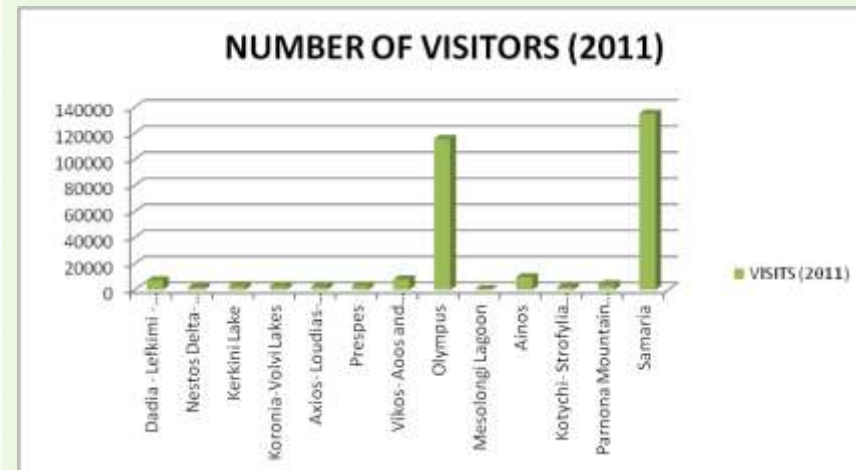
(c) the facilities and activities provided by the MBs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
education/ training	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X						X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X
promotion, support, organization and implementation of ecotourism programs	X	X	X		X	X	X												X				X		X			
<i>existence of an ecotourism-related program/ study</i>	X		X			X	X												X			X	X					
<i>staff/ consultant specialized in ecotourism</i>	X																											
<i>networks of paths/ observatories</i>	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X								X			X	X		X		X	X
<i>organization of tours/ visits</i>	X				X	X	X						X						X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
<i>organization of activities, such as hiking, observation etc.</i>	X						X																X	X	X			
granting of permits for guided tours																												
permits for scientific research and technical tests and analyses	X	X	X		X						X												X		X			
awarding of quality and partnership marks to enterprises engaging inside the protected areas																												

Source: field research

(d) the tourist demand

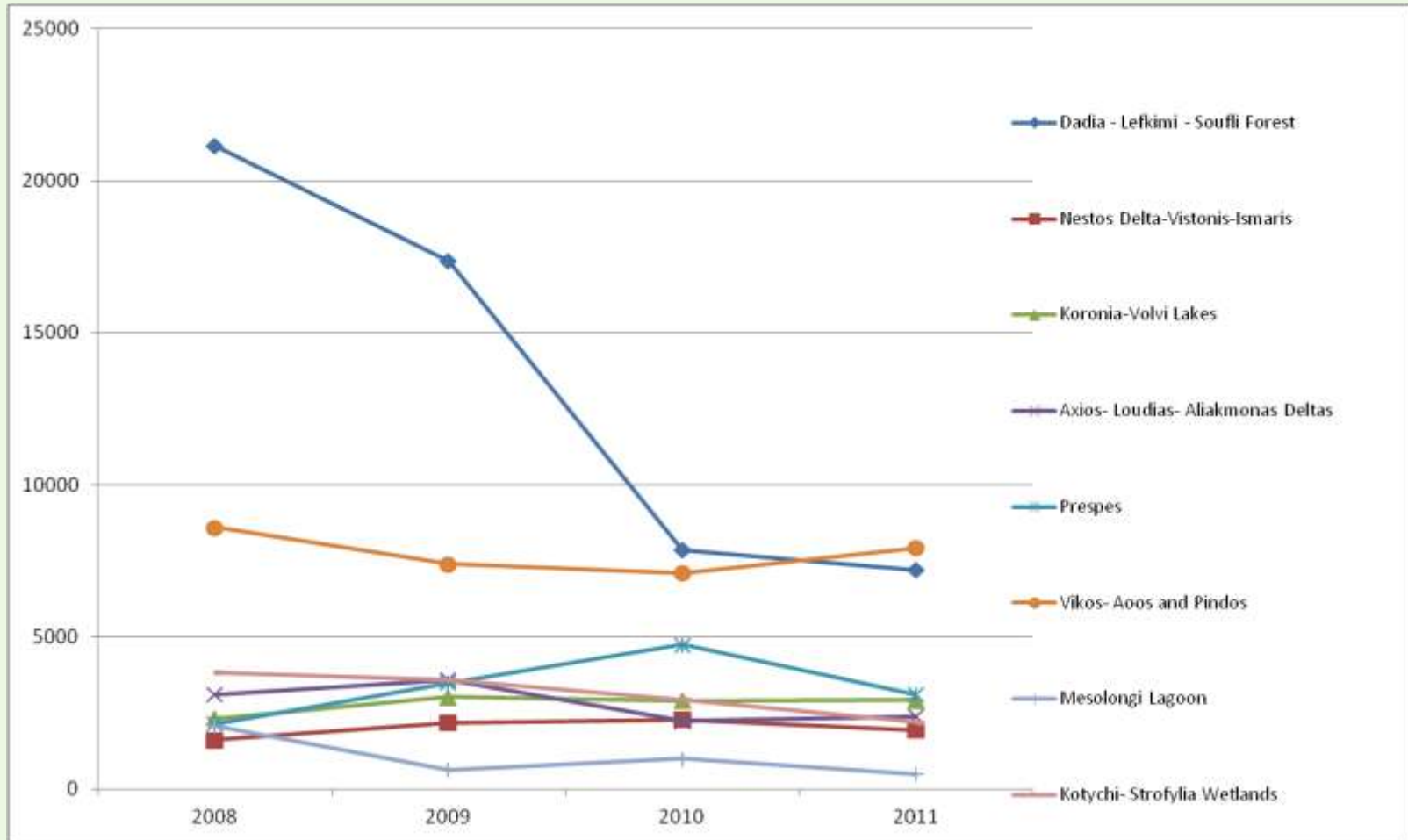
	Protected Areas	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
1	National Park of Evros Delta	9068	11293	8923	6444	
2	National Park of Dadia - Lefkimi - Soufli Forest	17836	21133	17368	7861	7195
3	National Park of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Nestos Delta-Vistonis-Ismaris)	1054	1610	2165	2280	1931
4	Rodopi Mountain Range National Park					
5	National Park of Kerkini Lake				2971	3183
6	National Park of Koronia-Volvi Lakes		2305	3019	2906	2913
7	National Park of Axios- Loudias- Aliakmonas Deltas	1081	3096	3591	2225	2375
8	National Park of Prespes		2143	3490	4743	3115
9	National Park of Northern Pindos (National Forests of Vikos- Aooos and Pindos)	6216	8800	7394	7107	7916
10	National Park of Tzoumerka, Peristeri and Arachthos Gorge					
11	Eco-Development Area of Pamvotis Lake					
12	National Park of Olympus Mountain				87000	115758
13	Eco-Development Area of Karla - Mavrovouni- Kefalovriso- Velesino					
14	National Marine Park of Alonnisos- Northern Sporades					
15	National Park of Amvrakikos Wetlands	2793	4805			
16	Area of Nature Protection of Narrow and Estuaries of Kalama and Aheroda Rivers					
17	National Park of Mesolongi Lagoon		2077	822	992	499
18	National Park of Ainos Forest					9698
19	National Marine Park of Zakynthos					
20	National Park of Oiti Forest					
21	National Park of Parnassos Forest					
22	National Park of Parnitha Forest					
23	National Park of Schinia- Marathona					
24	National Park of Chelimos- Vouraikos					
25	National Park of Kotychi- Strofyllia Wetlands	1281	3830	3597	2935	2198
26	Eco-Development Area of Parnona Mountain and Moustos Wetland					4142
27	Eco-Development Area of Karpathos - Saria					
28	National Park of Samaria and Lefka Ori Forests	158833	156557	149588	129372	135179



Source: field research, data recorded in the information centers of management bodies

(d) the tourist demand

Number of ecotourists per protected area and year

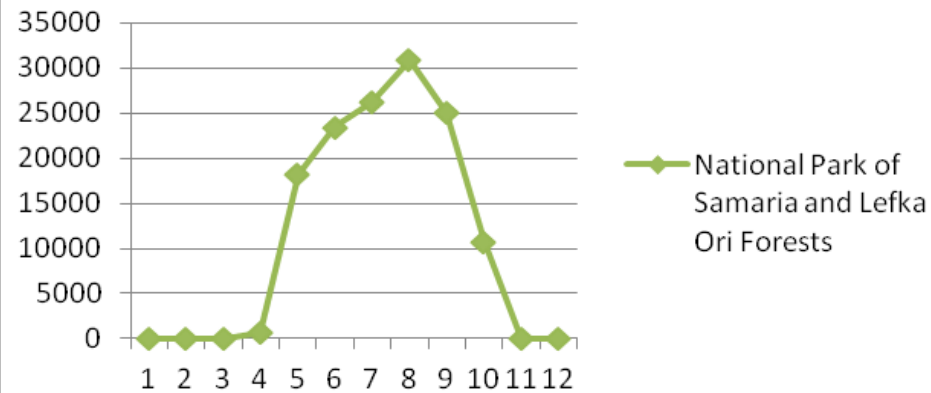


Source: field research, data recorded in the information centers of management bodies

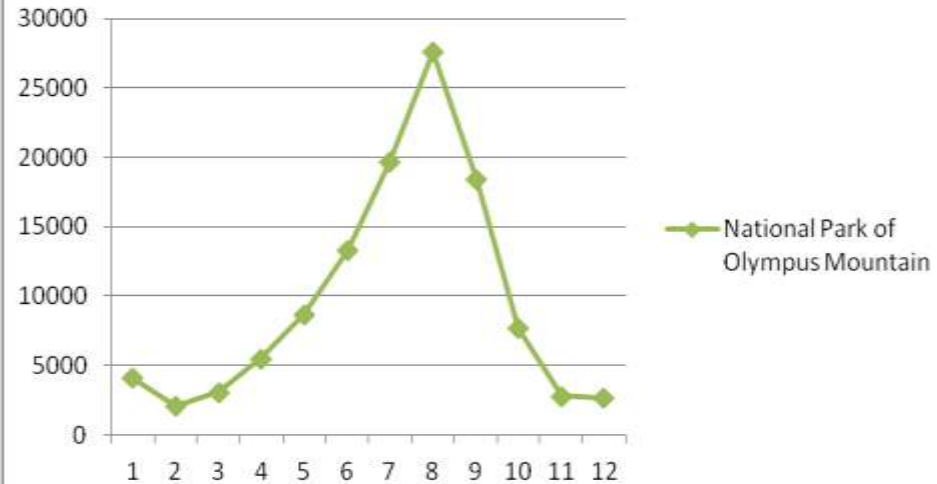
(d) the tourist demand

Number of ecotourists per protected area and month

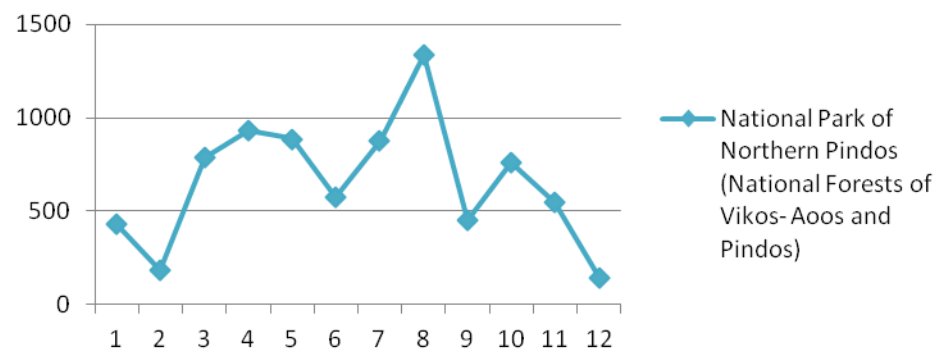
National Park of Samaria and Lefka Ori Forests



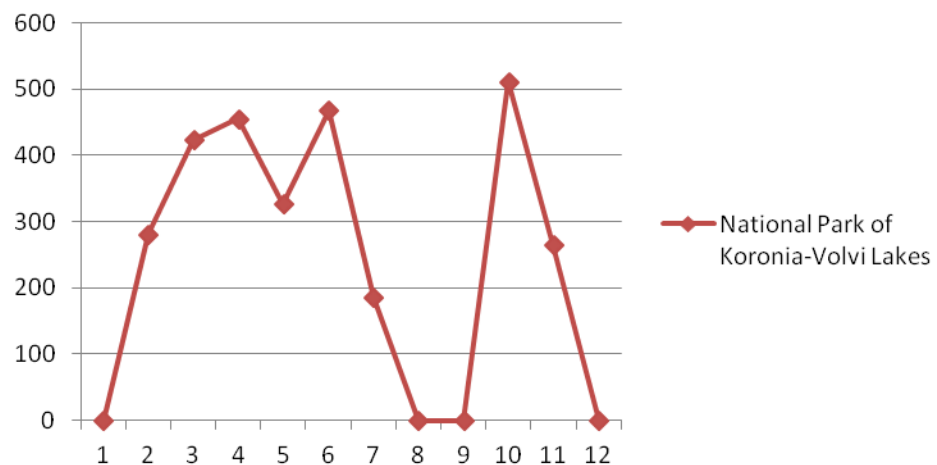
National Park of Olympus Mountain




National Park of Northern Pindos (National Forests of Vikos- Aaos and Pindos)




National Park of Koronia-Volvi Lakes

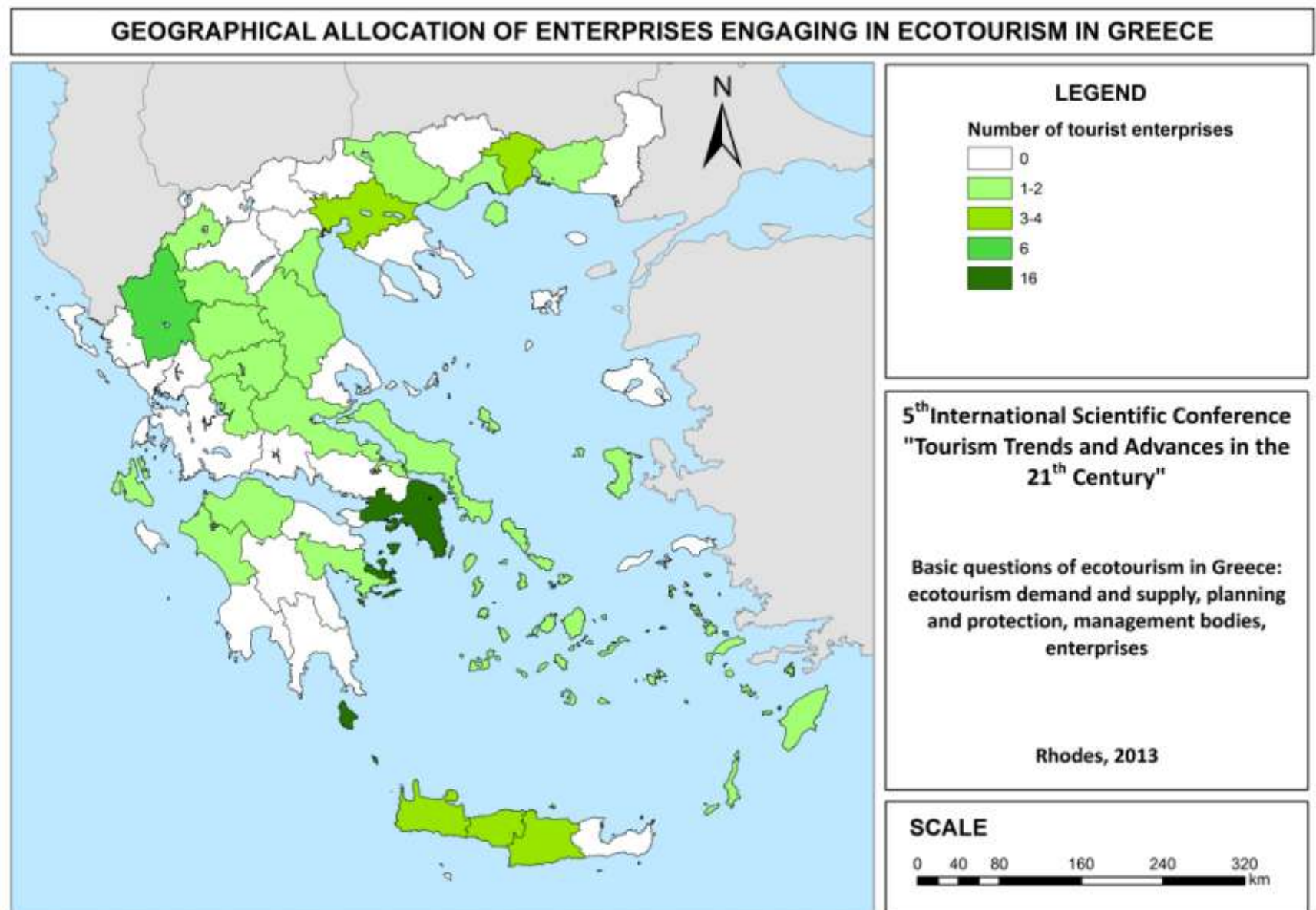




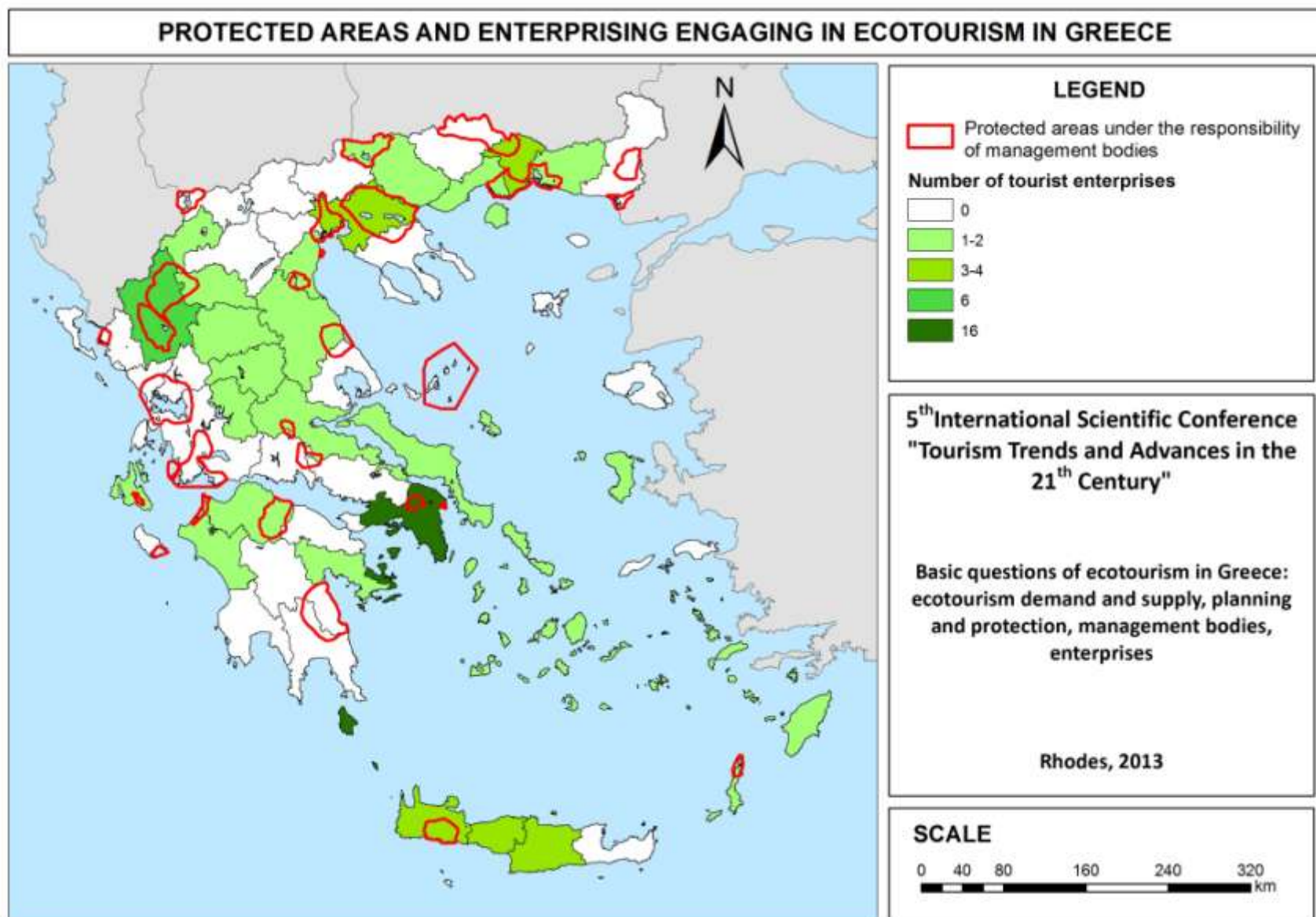
Criteria for the comparative evaluation of the 58 tourist enterprises engaging in alternative forms of tourism in Greece, placing emphasis on ecotourism:

- (a) the geographical allocation of enterprises engaging in ecotourism (which have been verified to currently operate)
 - (b) the legal form of the enterprises and their year of establishment
 - (c) the proportion of tourist agencies in the total number of enterprises
 - (d) the object of the enterprises
- 

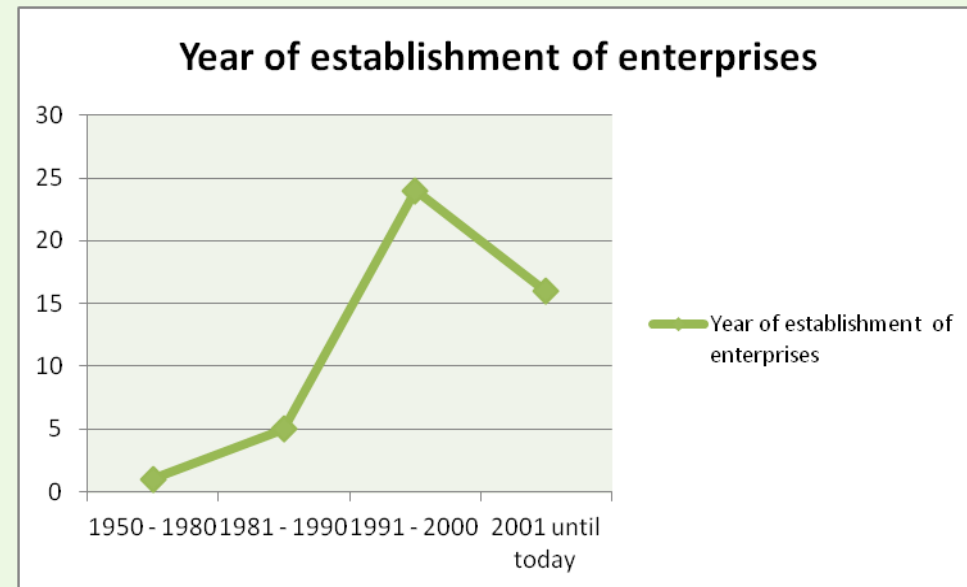
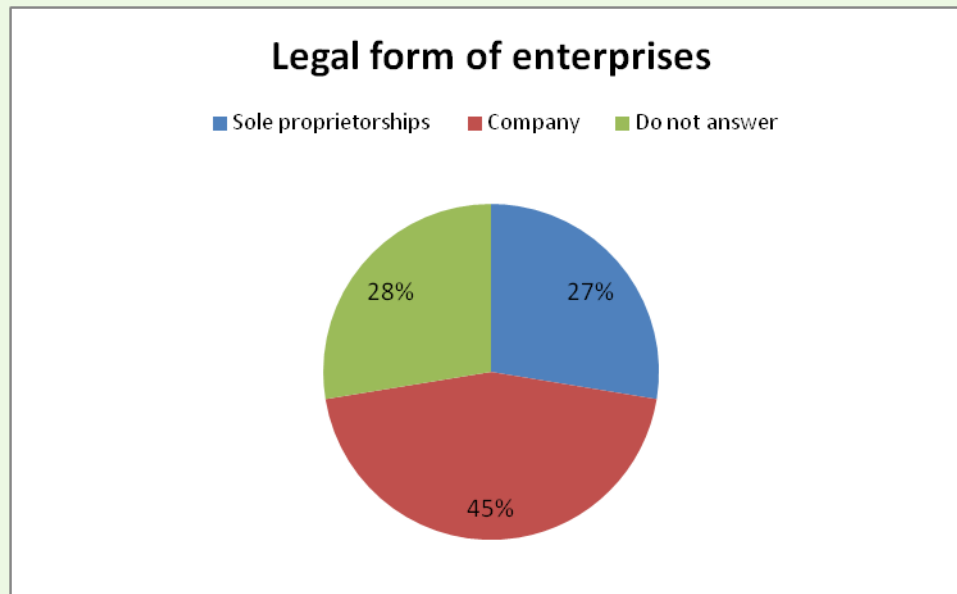
(a) the geographical allocation of enterprises engaging in ecotourism (which have been verified to currently operate)



(a) the geographical allocation of enterprises engaging in ecotourism (which have been verified to currently operate)

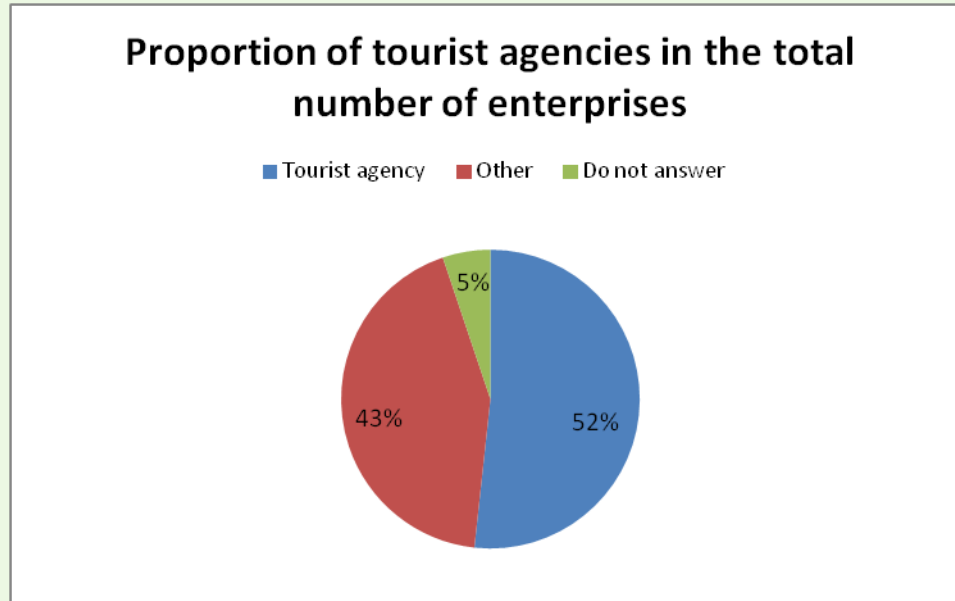


(b) the legal form of the enterprises and their year of establishment

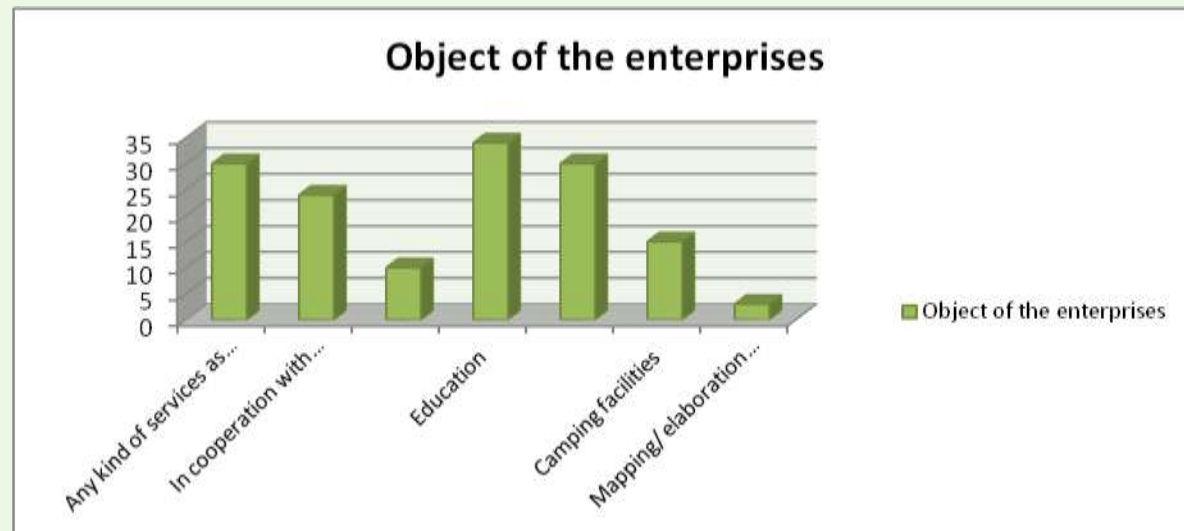


Source: field research

(c) the proportion of tourist agencies in the total number of enterprises



(d) the object of the enterprises



CONCLUSIONS

From the literature review:

- ✓ The question of the definition of ecotourism covers a major part of the literature.
- ✓ The largest part of researches in the literature is covered by case studies related to the ecotourism destination, namely the protected areas of less developed countries. There are almost no researches on the qualitative and quantitative features of ecotourism in Greece.
- ✓ Case studies on ecotourism pertain, in their vast majority, to public protected areas.
- ✓ The estimates - statistics predict an increase in the demand for ecotourism. In 2004, the World Tourism Organisation assessed that ecotourism and nature tourism, in general, increased all over the world three times more quickly than the tourist industry in its entirety.

CONCLUSIONS

From the field study:

- ✓ Even though the institutional framework strengthens the MBs, this is rendered impossible, in practice, due to the serious and lasting lack of economic and human resources.
- ✓ Some Bodies are much more active than the others.
- ✓ The planning in PAs in Greece is assessed as incomplete, fragmented and, in certain cases, even non-existent, which largely restricts protection capacities.
- ✓ Even in PAs where there are plans, there are no appropriate mechanisms for their implementation, control and follow-up.
- ✓ The elaboration of the MPs has been an obligation since 1999, no MP in the PAs has been approved to date.
- ✓ Many enterprises are referred to as “ecotourist”, but they feature very few or none of these characteristics, which means that ecotourism is used to attain economic objectives, by promoting the quality of the environment as a means for attracting tourists and not for conserving the natural capital (a few cases are excepted).



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!